

Is There a Hidden Jewish Meaning in *Don Quixote*?

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It will probably never be possible to prove that Cervantes was a *cristiano nuevo*, but the circumstantial evidence seems compelling. The *Instrucción* written by Fernán Díaz de Toledo in the mid-fifteenth century lists the Cervantes family as among the many noble clans in Spain that were of *converso* origin (Roth 95). The involvement of Miguel's ancestors in the cloth business, and his own father Rodrigo's profession of barber-surgeon—both businesses that in Spain were almost exclusively in the hand of Jews and *conversos*—are highly suggestive; his grandfather's itinerant career as *licenciado* is so as well (Eisenberg and Sliwa). As Américo Castro often pointed out, if Cervantes were not a *cristiano nuevo*, it is hard to explain the marginalization he suffered throughout his life (34). He was not rewarded for his courageous service to the Spanish crown as a soldier or for his exemplary behavior during his captivity in Algiers. Two applications for jobs in the New World—in 1582 and in 1590—were denied. Even his patron the Count of Lemos turn-

ed down his request for a secretarial appointment in the Viceroyalty of Naples.¹ For me, however, the most convincing evidence of Cervantes' *converso* background is the attitudes he displays in his work. I find it unbelievable that anyone other than a *cristiano nuevo* could have written the "Entremés del retablo de las maravillas," for example.

Once the idea that Cervantes was of *converso* ancestry had won wide acceptance, some readers, not surprisingly, began to look for hidden Jewish messages in *Don Quixote*. Since the 1960s a number of books and articles on this subject have been published. Although some of these have attracted considerable attention among the general reading public, I do not believe that any of them has had a significant impact on Cervantes scholarship. This is probably partly due to the fact that none was written by an academic with specialized training in Cervantes studies.

The first of these works, and I believe the most interesting as well, was Dominique Aubier's book *Don Quichotte, prophète d'Israël*, first published in 1966. A Spanish translation entitled *Don Quijote, profeta y cabalista* was published in Barcelona in 1981. Mme. Aubier is fairly well known in her native France, especially since a film about her life and work, entitled *Après la tempête: portrait d'une femme extraordinaire*, was released in 2000. Author of over thirty books, she has been twice nominated for a Nobel Prize.

According to Aubier, it is obvious that the character Don Quixote is based on Jewish models. The Jews, after all, are preeminently the "people of the book." What could be more Jewish than

¹ "Por cuanto hemos sondeado en la vida de Lemos...intuimos en el prócer un desvío hacia el escritor, que, por llamarle de alguna manera, le llamaremos desvío social. Ni el conde de Saldaña, ni el señor de Higuera, ni Cristóbal de Mesa, ni cuantos han ensalzado los torneos literarios patrocinados por D. Pedro, fuesen los celebrados en Madrid o los que en Valladolid tuvieron lugar, dan noticia de que Cervantes participase en ellos. Gustaba Lemos de hacerse acompañar en sus viajes por hombres de letras, y ni una sola vez nos encontramos al manco genial disfrutando cualquier invitación del Conde en este sentido. Sabemos que Góngora, los Argensola y otros literatos fueron huéspedes del palacio de Monforte; pero Cervantes, nunca" (Hermida 158–59).

Don Quixote's attempt to live a life based on his reading—to become, as it were, a living book? (67) Don Quixote's decision to adopt a new name to reflect his new understanding of his destiny recalls, for example, how God changed Abram's name to Abraham, and Jacob's name to Israel. Both of those names, however, are rich in symbolism, Abraham meaning "father of many nations" (Genesis 17:5), and Israel—according to the dubious but traditionally accepted etymology in Genesis 32:28—"he who strives with God." It therefore seems very odd that, after spending eight days pondering the choice of a new and significant name for himself, the best the protagonist of Cervantes' book could come up with was "Don Quixote." Although commentators have pointed out that, as a common noun, *quixote* designates a piece of armor for the thigh, that it recalls the name of *Lanzarote*, and that the suffix *-ote* in Spanish is usually comical or pejorative, this still seems unsatisfying. Aubier was the first person to point out that the word *qeshot* means "truth" or "certainty" in Aramaic and occurs frequently in the thirteenth-century masterpiece of Castilian mysticism known as the *Sefer ha-Zohar*, or *Book of Splendor*. She also observes that the stressed syllable in the name, 'ot, means "sign" in Hebrew (99). According to Aubier, Quixano, Don Quixote's original name, is an anagram for 'Anokhi, the Hebrew first-person pronoun, and hence indicates Cervantes' identification with his character (Quixano = 'Anokhi = I).

Aubier argues that Dulcinea symbolizes the *Shekhinah*—the Glory of God or Divine Presence, a feminine, maternal aspect of the divinity that was said to accompany the Jews in exile (102). The name of her hometown, El Toboso, represents the Hebrew words *tov sod*, literally, "good secret," or "secret of the good" (258).

Aubier also believes that the word *caballería* in *Don Quixote* is a veiled reference to *Qabbalah*. In her view *Don Quixote* is essentially an allegorical commentary on the *Zohar*, which in turn was a commentary on the Talmud, which was itself a commentary on the Bible (174). For Aubier the central message of *Don Quixote* is the need to reconcile the three great monotheistic religions through a more profound, universal understanding of the divine Word. That is why Cervantes made the hero of his novel a *crístia-*

no nuevo whose Jewish initiation is described in a book written by a Muslim and based principally on the *Zohar* (174–75). Just as the prophet Ezekiel preached a new, more universal form of Judaism after the destruction of the First Temple and the Babylonian Exile, so Cervantes—after the equally catastrophic expulsion of the Jews from Spain and in the midst of the horrors of the Inquisition—urges Jews, Christians, and Muslims to achieve a new synthesis.

María Rosa Menocal, in her excellent recent book *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*, makes much the same point, although in her view *Don Quixote* is more a lament for the loss of Spain's former pluralism than a plea for its restoration. "After 1492," she writes, "the religions of a significant portion of Spain's population were ferociously repressed, and eventually extinguished. Forged in the bonfires of ideas, of books, and of people was the illusory conceit that there could be a pure national and religious identity, and yet this became the ultimate religion everyone had to live with. Even though the famous scene of the burning of Don Quixote's library is often discussed as if it were no more than a self-referential literary conceit, can we really forget it was written at a moment when not only books, the most flammable of the memory palaces, but also people were being burned? *Don Quixote* is thus in part a postscript to the history of a first-rate place, the most poignant lament over the loss of that universe, its last chapter, allusive, ironic, bittersweet, quixotic" (263). Echoing the tragedy that had befallen Spain's Jews and Muslims, Don Quixote is insulted, scorned, misunderstood, tormented, ridiculed, often beaten within an inch of his life, and his books are burned.

According to Aubier, only a person who is steeped in the Jewish religion, history, and culture possesses the intellectual conditioning necessary to understand the real meaning of *Don Quixote*. A thorough knowledge of the *Zohar* is especially indispensable (282–85). As an example, she quotes the following passage from Book I, Chapter Two: "[Don Quijote] vio, no lejos del camino por donde iba, una venta, que fue como si viera una estrella que no a los portales, sino a los alcázares de su redención le encaminaba....

Fuese llegando a la venta que a él parecía castillo...esperando que algún enano se pusiese entre las almenas, a dar señal con alguna trompeta de que llegaba caballero al castillo... En esto sucedió acaso que un porquero, que andaba recogiendo de unos rastros una manada de puercos, que, sin perdón, así se llaman, tocó un cuerno, a cuya señal ellos se recogen, y al instante se le representó a don Quijote lo que deseaba, que era que algún enano hacía señal de su venida; y así, con estraño contento, llegó a la venta."

Thus Don Quixote approaches the inn where he will shortly be knighted, a necessary first step before undertaking his redemptive messianic mission. The *porquero* who announces his arrival by blowing a *cuerno* symbolizes a rabbi who alerts his flock to the dawn of redemption by blowing the shofar. In Cervantes' Spain converted Jews were of course commonly referred to as *marranos* or *puercos*. And the *Zohar* informs us that "every deliverance is announced by the shofar" (275). Aubier's conclusion is that "if one accepts that Cervantes' thought proceeds from a dynamic engagement with the concepts of the *Zohar*, themselves resulting from a dialectic dependence on Talmudic concepts, which in turn sprang from an active engagement with the text of Moses's book, it is then on the totality of Hebrew thought—in all its uniqueness, its unity of spirit, its inner faithfulness to principles clarified by a slow and prodigious exegesis—that the attentive reader of *Don Quixote* must rely in order at last to be free to release Cervantes' meaning from the profound signs in which it is encoded" (283).

The most important issue that Aubier fails to address in her book is how, where, and when Cervantes could have come to know the Jewish texts on which she claims he based *Don Quixote*. There is no evidence that he knew Hebrew or Aramaic or even that he had a sufficient command of Latin to have read the Zoharic texts that by his time were available in that language. In any case access to such texts would have been very difficult and dangerous for a layman in sixteenth-century Spain. If in fact he had any knowledge of the Jewish mystical tradition, the most likely possibility is that he acquired it through contact with Spanish-speaking Jews during the five years he spent in captivity in Algiers. As a *cautivo de rescate*, Cervantes was free to wander

through the city at will during much of the time that he was there, and it is plausible that he would have been attracted to the Sephardic Jews who shared his language and cultural background. As a person of enormous intellectual curiosity, he surely would not have passed up this opportunity to acquire firsthand knowledge of a religion that may well have been that of his ancestors. Did he have Jewish friends or acquaintances? Did he engage in discussions with them about the relative merits of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam? Might his refusal to take up his lot with them have caused them to taunt him as a *shoteh* ("fool" in Hebrew), or one who refused to acknowledge the *qeshot* of their faith? These are tantalizing questions which, in the present state of our knowledge, we simply cannot answer.

Leandro Rodríguez is a Professor of International Law at the University of Geneva. In the summer of 1978 he caused quite a sensation by reading a paper at an international conference on Cervantes in Madrid in which he claimed to have discovered positive proof that Cervantes was Jewish, that he was from the village of Cervantes in the Sanabria region of León, and that he was born in 1549 rather than 1547. Rodríguez is an eloquent speaker and exudes self-confidence. I think many of those at the conference found his arguments intriguing. Since he assured his audience that he would shortly be publishing a book fully documenting all his claims, some were at least willing to suspend judgment until the book came out. Unfortunately, the book, entitled *Don Miguel, judío de Cervantes*, which Rodríguez published in Santander at his own expense, was a big disappointment. I think he did manage to raise some very serious questions about the authenticity of the baptismal certificate in Alcalá de Henares, but the rest of his allegations turned out to have very little substance.

The village in León probably was the place where the surname Cervantes originated, but the claim that Miguel was born there was based on circumstantial evidence, such as a document Rodríguez found concerning an Aldonza, daughter of Lorenzo, dating from Cervantes' lifetime in the village of Santa Colomba, near Cervantes (109–10). There were several families named Saavedra—all of Jewish origin—in Santa Colomba. Rodríguez argues

that the *Cautivo's* statement that he was born "en un lugar de las montañas de León" (I, 39), like much of the rest of his tale, was actually autobiographical. According to Rodríguez, the fact that the tale begins with exactly the same words—*En un lugar de*—with which the novel itself had opened, suggests that *La Mancha*, where the book supposedly begins, is really just an oblique reference to the stain of Jewish blood on Cervantes' own lineage and is meant to conceal the novel's real setting, the "too Jewish" Sanabria. Rodríguez identified a number of locations in the Sanabria region that, according to him, closely resemble the sites of important episodes in *Don Quixote*. For example, the Cave of Montesinos is really the Cave of Ribadelago. The Lagunas de Ruidera are the seven lagoons in Sanabria, fed by the River Teira. Seven miles from Cervantes, there is a village called Trefacio, whose inhabitants are nicknamed "Burreiros." This was of course the original *pueblo del rebuzno*. Also nearby is the village of Villar de los Pisones. *Pisones*, Rodríguez notes, is just another name for *batanes*; Villar is therefore the location for the adventure of the fulling mills.

The argument that Cervantes was Jewish derives mainly from the fact that much of the population of Sanabria in Cervantes' time was of Jewish origin. According to Rodríguez, many Jews arrived there in 1492 on their way to exile in Portugal, were welcomed by the locals, and decided to settle in Sanabria, where they lived as crypto-Jews and were mostly involved in the production of linen. Among those people were Leandro Rodríguez's own ancestors. Rodríguez finds additional proof of Cervantes' Judaism in his own allegorical readings of *Don Quixote*. His own upbringing in Franco's Spain made Rodríguez particularly sensitive to this sort of interpretation. As he himself states, "en las épocas de dictaduras y de totalitarismos, de persecución y de dificultad los escritores suelen expresar verdades por medio de imágenes, metáforas y sobreentendidos. Cuando los grupos se declaran la guerra, y antes de declararla, tienen mensajes cifrados y enigmáticos para los profanos. Para cada sentido se necesita una explicación que tan sólo se da a los iniciados o perfectos.... Alegoría es Dulcinea del Toboso, Don Quijote de la Mancha, Marcela, los molinos de viento, la batalla entre los carneros y ovejas, y gran

parte de las imágenes del libro *El ingenioso hidalgo*" (52).

His allegorical readings are, for the most part, elaborations on the notions already proposed by Aubier. For example, Rodríguez interprets the marginal notation in Cide Hamete's manuscript stating that "Esta Dulcinea del Toboso..., dicen que tuvo la mejor mano para salar puercos que otra mujer de toda la Mancha" (I, 9) as a reference to the *Shekhinah's* miraculous preservation of the crypto-Jews, or Marranos (26). The bizarre marginal note is certainly cause for reflection. According to Menocal, it signifies that Dulcinea is "of good Converso stock" (262): "the more conspicuously she did all those Christian things, the more likely she was to be merely pretending to be a Christian" (263).

In an effort to attract wider attention to his ideas, Leandro Rodríguez organized a small but well-publicized international conference held in and around Zamora in July 1992. During the meeting, the participants decided to found a new scholarly organization to be called Caminos de Cervantes y Sefarad and to hold another conference in 1994. Other ambitious plans included buying the house that was believed to have belonged to Cervantes' family in the village of Cervantes and making it into a museum, sponsoring further research on Jewish remains in the Sanabria area, and producing a video. The second conference took place as scheduled, this time in Bragança, just across the Portuguese border from Sanabria, and with the sponsorship of UNESCO. The papers presented at the second conference were published in Zamora in 1995. Since then, Rodríguez has continued to scour the Sanabria region for sites resembling those described in *Don Quijote*. In 1999 he published a new book, *Cervantes en Sanabria: la ruta de Don Quijote de la Mancha*, in which he presented extremely detailed itineraries of Don Quixote's three sallies, arguing that the book's most important episodes take place in the Zamora-Sanabria region. At a celebration of the book's publication held in the village of Cervantes, the president of the Asociación para el Desarrollo Integrado de Sanabria y Carballeda announced that the Asociación planned to promote year-round tourism along this new "route of Don Quixote," and as a first step would be posting signs marking one route suitable for walking and another for travel by car. Rodríguez is now seeking official approval of the

route as a European Cultural Itinerary by the Council of Europe. According to an article published in the newspaper *El Norte de Castilla* in May 2001, the route had attracted over 1,000 tourists during the previous year.

Ruth Reichelberg, who participated in the conference in Bragança in 1994, is a professor of comparative literature at Bar Ilan University in Ramat-Gan, Israel. Her book *Don Quichotte ou le roman d'un juif masqué* was first published in 1989 and reprinted in paperback ten years later. Reichelberg argues that the name Rocinante contains an important clue to Cervantes' Jewishness. In the prefatory sonnet to the 1605 *Quijote* that is a dialogue between Babieca and Rocinante, Babieca says that Rocinante's skininess is the fault of Don Quixote's squire. Rocinante replies:

¿Cómo me he de quejar en mi dolencia
si el amo y escudero o mayordomo
son tan rocines como Rocinante?

This, according to Reichelberg, establishes an equivalence between knight, horse, and author. One might already have guessed at such a playful connection between author and horse because of the similarity of the names Rocinante and Cervantes (57). What is especially significant about this, in Reichelberg's view, is that Covarrubias defines *rocín* as "el potro que...por no... ser de buena raza, no llegó a merecer el nombre de caballo." What Don Quixote, Rocinante, and Cervantes have in common is precisely "no ser de buena raza," a fact further emphasized by Don Quixote's title "de la Mancha," since *mancha* was another sixteenth-century buzzword, defined by Covarrubias as "todo aquello que estraga y desdora lo que de suyo era bueno, como mancha en un linaje." Daniel Eisenberg has observed that, in view of the fact that Sancho Panza often and emphatically proclaims that he is an Old Christian, Don Quixote's silence about his own background may speak louder than words ("one could hardly expect him to declare 'I am a new Christian'").² In addi

² *Study* 150 n. 164, *Interpretación* 142 n. 170; also *Study* 189 n. 26, *Interpreta-*

tion to the interpretations of the name Quixote already suggested by Aubier, Reichelberg notes that in Hebrew *Ki shoteh* means "for [he is] a fool" (67).

Reichelberg agrees with Aubier that Dulcinea symbolizes the *Shekhinah*, but she is the first to have pointed out how the portrayal of Dulcinea in *Don Quixote* reflects the two-sided or ambiguous nature of the *Shekhinah* in Kabbalah. Poised between heaven and earth, the *Shekhinah*, when she is in harmonious union with her divine male counterpart, is the bearer of life, health, and all sorts of blessings; but when that unity is disrupted by Israel's sins, she instead brings down death, illness, suffering, and destruction on the whole world. Hence, the kabbalists often applied to her the verse from the Song of Songs: "I am black but beautiful." Likewise, Dulcinea is portrayed in the novel as both the idealized acme of feminine perfection described by Don Quixote; the earthy, mannish Aldonza Lorenzo described by Sancho; the peasant woman reeking of garlic whom Sancho presents to Don Quixote as the enchanted Dulcinea; and the grotesque figure whom Don Quixote saw "saltando y brincando como cabra" in the Cave of Montesinos (103).

Don Quixote's madness is that of the prophets, visionaries, saints, and mystics (81). He believes that he is the Messiah sent to redeem Israel from her foes. He attacks idolatry, represented by the penitents carrying a religious statue, and particularly the Christian idolatry of belief in the doctrine of transubstantiation when he slashes the wineskins (95). He expresses his messianic view of himself in Chapter One of Part Two when he tells the priest and barber: "Pero Dios mirará por su pueblo y deparará alguno que, si no tan bravo como los pasados andantes caballeros, a lo menos no les será inferior en el ánimo. Y Dios me entiende y no digo más." His messianic character is further underlined by his title "Caballero de los leones," since the lion was the symbol of the royal line of Judah from which the messiah was destined to be born (134).

Don Quixote's vision in the Cave of Montesinos marks a dramatic turning point in his self-understanding. For Reichelberg

the cave's name is a pun meaning *monte de sinos*, "mountain of destinies." It is there that Don Quixote will at last come to understand the esoteric meaning of his adventures (153). According to Reichelberg,

Having come there seeking confirmation of his vocation, Don Quixote finds a people condemned five centuries ago, suffering their exile without understanding it and waiting for deliverance to spring forth from the bosom of the darkest night. He is given another understanding: action in this world, though it does shed some light on it, at the same time strengthens the power of the forces of evil. Bravery, courage, the gift of self, the sacrifice of one's own life—all of this will not finally succeed in making Satan recoil. Action alone may be nothing but another illusion.

From now on, Don Quixote, taking upon himself Dulcinea's exile, will live in exile from himself, cut off from his spiritual nourishment.... Don Quixote has just discovered extreme loneliness, the loneliness of God with which he must henceforth make common cause. A new element enters into his quest: besides the rigor and justice he had always embodied, he must from now on add mercy and charity. The world awaits its deliverer, but he must show more than courage. He must save God from His own exile. (164–65)

Don Quixote now fully identifies with the Jewish people, understanding that righteousness is not enough. One must learn to deal craftily with the forces of evil if one is not to be destroyed by them. Defeated by the Caballero de la Blanca Luna, Don Quixote at last learns to accept the fact that only God, not he himself, can decide when the time is ripe for redemption. In the meantime, all he can do is cling to his faith, refusing to renounce it even when threatened with death.

Before concluding, I would like to mention just one more piece of evidence of Cervantes' knowledge of Judaism. In 1987 a Costa Rican attorney named Bernardo Baruch read a paper at a Sephardic Studies Conference at SUNY Binghamton entitled "A

Page of the Talmud in the *Quixote*: Cervantes: Jew, Talmudist, and Cabalist?" Baruch was the first person to have noticed that the little story about the old man who hid some money he had borrowed inside a cane, handed the cane to the lender, and then claimed to have returned the money—one of the cases Sancho has to adjudicate during his governorship of Barataria—follows very closely a famous story called *qanya de-Rabba* ("Rabba's cane"; Rabba was a distinguished Talmudic sage who died in 352) told in the Talmudic tractate *Nedarim* 25a. The version in the Talmud reads: "A man with a monetary claim upon his neighbor once came before Raba, demanding of the debtor, 'Come and pay me.' 'I have repaid you,' pleaded he. 'If so,' said Raba to him, 'go and swear to him that you have repaid.' Thereupon he went and bought a [hollow] cane, placed the money therein, and came before the Court, walking and leaning on it. [Before swearing] he said to the plaintiff: 'Hold the cane in your hand.' He then took a scroll of the Law and swore that he had repaid him all that he [the creditor] held in his hand. The creditor thereupon broke the cane in his rage and the money poured out on the ground; it was thus seen that he had [literally] sworn to the truth" (71).

Scholars have assumed that Cervantes' source of the story was Jacobus de Voragine's thirteenth-century *Legenda aurea*. In his life of St. Nicholas of Bari, Jacobus recounts: "A certain man had borrowed some money from a Jew, giving him his oath on the altar of Saint Nicholas that he would repay it as soon as possible. As he was slow in paying, the Jew demanded his money; but the man declared that he had returned it. He was summoned before the judge, who ordered him to swear that he had repaid the money. In the meantime, the man had placed the money that he owed in a hollow staff, and before giving his oath, he asked the Jew to hold the staff for him. Whereupon he swore that he had returned the money and more besides. Then he took back his staff, the Jew handing it over all unaware of the trick. But on the way home the defender fell asleep on the roadside and was run over by a chariot, which also broke open the staff in which the gold was hidden. Learning this, the Jew ran to the spot; but although the bystanders pressed him to take his money, he said that he would do so only if, by the merits of Saint Nicholas, the

dead man was restored to life, adding that in this event he himself would receive baptism and be converted to the faith of Christ. Immediately the dead man came back to life and the Jew was baptized" (22).

It seems likely that Jacobus's story is derived from the much earlier version in the Talmud. In a recent article José Faur, who teaches Talmud at Bar Ilan University, has analyzed in great detail the similarities between the story in *Don Quixote* and the one in the Talmud, arguing that Cervantes seems to show a surprising understanding of the ethical complexities of the Talmudic story. The rabbis were trying to show that it is possible to lie under oath without committing perjury so as to find ways to prevent such abuse of mental reservations. Jacobus subverts the moral of this originally Jewish story by turning it into a miracle intended to prove the truth of the Christian faith and bring about the conversion of a Jew! There is of course no way of proving that the Talmudic version was Cervantes' immediate source, but the evidence at least suggests that he might have had contact with people familiar with the Talmud. Faur argues that he might have heard the story from a Spanish-speaking Jew during his captivity in Algiers (167). He notes that, when Sancho was asked to explain how he had solved this conundrum, he offered three different explanations: (1) he deduced the truth logically from observing the behavior of the two men; (2) God inspired him to render a just and wise decision, in spite of his own foolishness; and (3) he recalled having heard his village priest tell a similar story. Faur says that the purpose of his article was to identify the "priest's" sources (and hence his identity) (167).

My main purpose in writing this essay has been to summarize and evaluate the arguments of writers who have proposed that there is in fact a hidden Jewish meaning in *Don Quixote*, not to offer original arguments of my own. In that sense this is more in the nature of a review essay than an article.³ While some of the

³ Worth mentioning also, although it does not claim to find a Jewish meaning in *Don Quixote*, is *El Caballero del Verde Gabán* by Luis G. Hortigón. According to the description of the book posted on h-Cervantes, the author claims to have

theories I have mentioned seem extremely speculative and far-fetched, others are less easily dismissed. I am personally convinced that Cervantes deliberately portrayed Don Quixote as a *cristiano nuevo*, and that by the end of Book II he emerges as a sympathetic, even lovable character. That in itself is surely significant, but what does it mean? Why is almost every reference to representatives of Spanish Catholicism in the book ironic, negative, or disparaging? After spending most of my adult life—and I am now sixty-two years old—studying *Don Quixote* and the vast bibliography of Cervantine criticism, I still find the book a tantalizing *equivoco*. When I read *Don Quixote* today, I have the impression of reading a series of loosely connected parables whose meaning or application is never clearly spelled out. I am reminded of the following words penned fifty years ago by Leo Strauss: “the influence of persecution on literature is precisely that it compels all writers who hold heterodox views to develop a peculiar technique of writing, the technique which we have in mind when speaking of writing between the lines. The expression is clearly metaphoric. Any attempt to express its meaning in unmetaphoric language would lead to the discovery of a terra incognita, a field whose very dimensions are as yet unexplored and which offers ample scope for highly intriguing and even important investigation” (24).

I think it is beyond question that Cervantes held heterodox views, and that in *Don Quixote* he created an amazingly ingenious way of planting seeds of doubt in the minds of thoughtful readers without arousing the suspicions of censors. As for the question of whether any of those heterodox views were specifically Jewish in nature, I must at this point simply remain agnostic. Nevertheless, I consider this a legitimate area of inquiry—one that may yet yield important results—and I hope that this little

discovered the house of the Knight of the Green Coat, and “Don Quijote de la Mancha y el caballero del Verde Gabán eran la misma persona. Quijada y Miranda tienen cinco vocales iguales y siete letras las sefirot de la cába.” In the basement of this house was found a “sinagoga de iguales dimensiones a la Santa María la Blanca de Toledo.” (<<http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=h-cervantes&month=0305&week=d&msg=NonuT9nL8Q%2bOa3PYTh9uig&user=&pw=>>, 2 June 2003).

summary of the findings to date will lead others to pursue it further, and with greater scholarly rigor.

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